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NEW BOOKS REVIEWED

FICTION

THE NEW MACHIAVELLI. By H. G. WELLS. New York: Duffield & Co., 1911.

H. G. WELLS occasionally writes, we will not say, a great novel, though we were tempted to say that of *Tono-Bungay*, but a big novel. After he has written one he unbends, and writes two or three small ones while he prepares for the next big effort. The big effort in the present case is *The New Machiavelli*, one of Wells's ablest productions, and a book that gives us food for thought. As Mr. Bennet in *Clayhanger*, so Mr. Wells here gives us in all its lamentable ugliness and sordidness the picture of the life of a young Englishman of the lower middle class, but of a young man of intellectual vigor, one who thought in terms of "harbors and shining navies, great roads engineered marvelously, jungles cleared and deserts conquered, the ending of muddle and diseases and dirt and misery, the ending of confusion that wastes human possibilities." If one desired to sum up Mr. Wells's plea in a word one would say that in this book he tried to bring home to our consciences our shocking prodigality with human life and happiness. We are careful of wealth, of forests, of water-supplies, of national glory; we are even beginning here and there to be careful of health. But we waste human beings, and we waste human happiness.

"The line of human improvement and the expansion of human life," writes Mr. Wells, "lies in the direction of education and finer initiatives. If humanity cannot develop an education far beyond anything that is now provided, if it cannot collectively invent devices and solve problems on a much richer, broader scale than it does at present, it cannot hope to achieve any very much finer order or any more general happiness than it now enjoys. . . . If those who have power and leisure now and freedom to respond to imaginative appeals cannot be won to the idea of collective self-development, then the whole of humanity cannot be won to that." Mr. Wells goes on to state in the person of his hero that his general conception of politics is a conception of the constructive imagination working upon the vast complex of powerful people, clever people, enterprising people, influential people, amidst whom power is diffused to-day, to produce that self-conscious, highly selective, open-minded, devoted, aristocratic culture, which seems to be the necessary next phase in the development of human affairs. Human progress, as he sees it, is no longer to be the spontaneous product of crowds of raw minds swayed by elementary needs, but a natural and elaborate result of intricate human interdependencies, of human energy and curiosity liberated and acting at leisure, of human

passions and motives, modified and redirected by literature and art. In short, Mr. Wells, who was once a Socialist, is now making a strong plea for an aristocracy of brains and talent, with the personal freedom which would be the natural concomitant of such a development. Of the immediate results of such personal freedom he gives us an example in the present story, where the hero sacrifices career, renown, future, and wife to an illicit passion. Mr. Wells does some excellent special pleading in his hero's behalf, but to those older than Mr. Wells there still seems to be no moral law more comprehensive than Kant's: "Let every act be such that it might become a moral law"; there is no desirable freedom which hurts and cripples another. Also one questions whether these passions which men plead for as so necessary to personal development would not offer just as much development if restrained, nobly restrained, for the sake of a more general welfare. At any rate, Mr. Wells's book covers a vast deal of ground: pictures of London suburbs in the last half of the nineteenth century, the political life of to-day, innumerable portraits of men and women, and scenes of social and political life. Mr. Wells brings a brilliant and active mind to his work, but no one more than Mr. Wells suggests the thought that intellect is only one part of a man's endowment, and that there are other and more profound regions in the human soul.

THE PATRICIAN. By JOHN GALSWORTHY. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911.

The Patrician is a very subtle study in the flaws and limitations of the patrician temperament, and it is the more convincing because it is generous. No one of the present generation of adults has looked at the English gentleman with a keener and more impartial eye than Mr. Galsworthy. From the *Island Pharisees*, the *Man of Property*, the *Country House*, on to this book he has quietly, truthfully, and handsomely portrayed his country people, nothing extenuated nor aught set down in malice.

There may be a little less distinction, a little less of the keen satire for which we have loved Mr. Galsworthy in this volume, but there is undoubtedly an enthralling canvas none the less. Lady Casterley, the grandmother of Lord Miltoun, a little lady in whose personality lay the tremendous force of accumulated decision, "the inherited assurance of one whose prestige had never been questioned," is a bit of portraiture as distinctive as a Velasquez, and in another *genre* Susie is as delightful a drawing of childhood. As against the doubting and dissembling loves of Miltoun and Mrs. Noel we have the less painful affair of Lady Barbara and Courtier. There is something in the picture of Courtier which continually reminds one of Bernard Shaw; one can fancy him in much the same way riding off from a love-affair not too hard hit to renew his interest in the impersonal life.

The Patrician as a story is more nearly a bit of literature than anything in English fiction of this year that has reached us. It has charm, distinction, interest, and gives an intimate glimpse into English political life.

QUEED. By HENRY SYDNOR HARRISON. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911.

A book that opens with such gross offenses to the English language and